Kermun Calendar

BGWS(years before the Great War started)

DGW(During Great War)

AGWE(years after the Great War ends)

Book Title: The History of Kermun

Summary: *The real number of days and years in the Great War is unknown, but there are estimates. It lasted for approximately 735 years, and the years during that time were noted as DGW and how many years since the war had started.*

Journal Entry: If I must die, someone must know the truth. Date: 6 After Great War End(AGWE)

I am on a death sentence. I was a spy for the losers' side. But someone must know the truth about the Germuns. I'm put in a pot of oil on Tuesday, so I have 5 days to tell you the truth.

The Germuns have quite a history, starting way back. On their 4444th day of life, all the Germuns got 2 daggers, 2 twin rapiers that couldn't be told apart by anyone except the owner. One rapier was a normal one, and the other was intertwined with the user's soul. It could use psychic power from the user and make it fly, and cut like any other. Additionally, the Germuns got a longbow. These weapons are key to survival.

See, Germuns were cursed. The Great Empire had tried to exterminate the Germuns for millennia.

Today, Gerd would go to the market and sell the prey from the trap. It had been a fat, delicious-looking squirrel and a bunny, but he needed the money to pay his rent of 1000 Kerms to his charmingly abusive owner. Kerms were the new currency after the Great War. He had 900 Kerms so far, and he was incredibly lucky to have them. He had caught a deer, young and short, using his weak excuse for a longbow. He couldn't have a real one till his 4444th day, which by the way was tomorrow. Usually, his dad paid for most of it, but he was usually off somewhere, and he considered Gerd old enough to pay for it alone. His dad wanted him to "take more responsibility"(which is just his way of saying I'm going to disappear, take care of everything bye.) Gerd went to the market, which was about half a

kilometer away. It *happened* to be raining, just like he always *happened* to have horrid luck. He sighed.

Gerd rubbed his mother's charm. It was pure gold, colored red like a phoenix, white as an angel, black as night, and blue as the sky. Gerd thought it had *way* more value than the 10,000 Kerms the goldsmith had offered him for it. It was altogether mysterious to Gerd: the shape, density, and color. It was a clover, but the outsides were extremely heavy while the inside appeared almost hollow. Gerd considered it weird, but he'd always had it as a good luck charm.

The cold rain pressed on him, but his squirrel and bunny were safe. The butcher's stand was open. The butcher usually was as warm as an icicle, but he offered a fair price, so Gerd liked him. He put the squirrel down on the stand, next to the bunny. If Gerd didn't get enough, his dad would scream at him. Gerd rubbed his mother's charm harder this time. The butcher grunted.

"120 Kerms. No more," said the butcher.

120 Kerms was more than enough!

"Of course!" was Gerd's response. The butcher gave him the coins.

The butcher closed his window without further talk. Gerd held the coins tightly and in amazement. Enough to pay rent. Enough to avoid his dad screaming at him. Maybe he would even say something nice! Maybe. Gerd turned to go home with that hope in his back pocket.

Today was going amazingly. It was almost too good to be true. Sure, it was raining, but he had gotten more than enough money! Of course, that's when the universe decided his good luck should end.

"Whatcha do'in, bug?"

Gerd didn't even have to turn around. He ran.

They were the twins, and they were the sons of the count who ruled Gerd's county, Methon County. He was a rude grump, and his sons had *always* messed with Gerd. Like, since they were born. Before, his mom protected him, but she was gone. One day there, the next gone.

Gerd knew he could just drop the bag and avoid all this… He knew it, and he wanted to do it with all of his good logic. They would maybe leave him alone, maybe not, but he would at least stand a chance at escaping. But Gerd wasn't like that. He kept running, not

because he thought he wouldn't get away, but because he wouldn't give in without a fight at least.

A snarling voice interrupted his thoughts.

"We've almost caught up, you slim bastard! Oh, surrender those coins, please," the twin's voice rebounded in Gerd's head like a hammer knocking his breath out. It was true. They had almost caught up, and they would take his 120 Kerms.

Gerd took a sharp left. This was a risk. He might lose them that way, but he also didn't know what was next on that turn. He would also eventually get lost. Even so, he took it.

He kept running. Gerd could now feel one of the twins' hot breath on his shoulder. Suddenly, they punched him in the back. He leaned down, injured, but didn't stop running. Another punch, this time better aimed at his back, however, took him down. They kicked him, and everything went black.

Gerd woke up in his dad's office. Several tonics lay at the tip of his bed. 120 Kerms were on the side. His dad was observing him.

"Hi!" Gerd said.

His dad didn't respond.

Gerd searched his face, and, much to his surprise, found sadness. A slight twitch, there for Gerd to see. His dad pulled his face away. It was almost as if hearing that hurt.

Gerd wanted to keep pressuring, to ask where his dad had been, but couldn't bring enough courage to it. Gerd limited himself to watching his dad leave, and hoped that his silence would maybe add strength to him to ask later.

Instead, he limited himself to getting up and leaving. Gerd figured he wanted to let him rest, so he tried to get some rest.

Gerd saw the sun spilling through his room. He groaned and instantly remembered what day it was. Today would be a miserable day. Yesterday had been, too. He had almost died by bullies at the market, twin sons of the count of the Great King. They had tried to kill all existing Germuns, and thus, they hid. That is, until their 4444th day of life. Today, Gerd had to stay with his dad all day. It was his 4444th day of life. Today, his normal life would die. Dad said it was exciting.

'It's very exciting to go on quests where you die. It's extremely exciting to have assassins dispatched at the mention of your name. **VERY, VERY EXCITING**, ' thought Gerd. Each and every Germun had a special power. It only came to you on your 4444th day, and sometimes, you didn't realize they were there until a day later.

Gerd went down to eat breakfast. His dad was nowhere to be seen. *'Probably went on a run'* was the first impression of Gerd. Then, he remembered it was his 4444th day. *Nobody* in the family alive would miss another family member's 4444th day. Oh well. He probably forgot. His dad forgets a lot. And yet, a bad feeling came down his spine.

Today, he wasn't supposed to go to Schola[1]. He would get all his weapons in the morning, at home. Then, they would ride to a 'sacred place' as his dad called it, to enchant his rapier and discover and practice his magic that came along with it. He waited, but his dad didn't come.

'Dad's runs usually take about an hour. I'll wait that long., ' Gerd thought. Time stretched and twisted. To entertain himself, he practiced throwing his daggers and archery. The longbow was fake and crappy, something his dad had made for him to practice. Apparently, he couldn't have a 'real bow' until this day. Really! The arrows also weren't sharp. However, it was what he had, and he would deal with it! He was okay with the bow and arrow. His dad had taught him a few tricks.

'Relax. Not too firm. Pull back. Calculate wind. Release. Follow through.' His arrow hit the target, but not in the center. *'Damn!'* His dad would be disappointed. That is, if he ever came back.

Oh yeah, his dad was *damn* good at the bow and arrow. In fact, his magic allowed him to make a perfect shot from anywhere. Even without using his magic, though, he could still make the center *twice* the distance from where he was. He pulled out another crappy arrow. He loaded it in the bow.

'Relax. Not too firm. Pull back. Calculate wind. Release. Follow through.' His arrow hit the target, more centered than the first, but still not in the center.

'Maybe magic can't fix this anyway. That would be improbable! No way that's true!' Gerd thought. Gerd often thought that on his 4444th day, his problems would be fixed by magic. That was because his dad blabbed on and on about how good magic was and all, but Gerd often doubted his thoughts that he would be perfect, starting today, or whenever he got his magic.

Gerd grabbed another arrow. *'Focus!'* He released. His arrow didn't even hit the target. Frustrated, Gerd switched to using his dagger to throw. He got closer, raised his dagger- but then, somebody knocked at the door.

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[1] Latin for school.

'It's probably my dad!' he thought. But then, he thought better. No, he didn't think. His mom probably sent some sort of message through the dead. The thought told him to be careful. So Gerd did his practiced moves, and grabbed his mask and laced it over himself. Even if it were his dad, he would likely yell at Gerd for not doing the practiced drill. He grabbed his dagger, dipped it in some poison, and hid it under his shirt. Next, he pressed a button. The button would ask in a 'neutral' way(though it was your typical robot voice, which Gerd thought was *really* annoying). It beeped.

"Who is it?" it asked with a stone voice. Then, the door exploded. *REALLY!* Gerd, without thinking twice, raised his poisoned dagger. And threw. The dagger whistled through thin air.

"What the" Gerd said aloud. The intruder had already invaded the house. Gerd raised his dagger… and got pushed to the ground by an unnatural force of wind. A monstrous figure towered over him. They wore all black, with a mask.

"*Lower that monstrous thing… or perish*", a hissing voice came at him. He lowered his dagger.

"*Good! Now that you're off guard, Chosen, I shall kill you. In the name of the* Great King*! In the name of the* Great Empire*!*" The assassin was about to lower his dagger into Gerd's throat. Gerd watched in slow-mo.

'*Damm it!*'. So this was how he was going to die. How… tragic. Murdered in his own home.

He wondered what the tombstone would look like. '*Died in his own home because he lowered his dagger to a threat, '* or something like that. Suddenly, an arrow pierced the assassin's back. A second one, and it was easy to tell they were poisoned. The assassin dropped dead like a stone. Gerd looked up. His dad towered over him.

"Let's go." Gerd was, in simple form, *shocked*. He was in shock, and that was probably the only reason that all the questions that were thundering in the side of his brain didn't come out, and probably the same reason his dad didn't drop dead from all of the sudden questions. Probably, maybe not. The questions thundering him were:

'Where are we going to go?' 'What just happened?' 'Am I going to get my weapons?' 'Who was that?' 'Why did they want to kill me?' 'Where were you?' 'How did he knock me down?' and others. But Gerd limited himself to giving a blank stare. His dad looked worried.

"Let's go", his dad repeated.

His dad went outside and gathered the horses. Gerd didn't know how to ride; his dad hadn't taught him. His dad had never trusted him, for reasons Gerd didn't know why. When he had free time, Gerd had to have a serious talk with his dad.

His dad had gathered the horse and the pony, the horse a grayish black one, the pony a beautiful white-cream. They were both extremely agile. The horse was much stronger, the pony more attractive and slightly more agile.

Gerd didn't know where they had come from. He knew they were there; he just didn't know where his dad had gotten them. His dad mounted on the whitish-cream one.

"Come on, this one! Just keep your balance, and I'll make her go!" hollered his dad.

Gerd, still in *shock*, got up and, after various tries because his legs wobbled, hobbled over to the pony. His dad picked him up like he was a feather and plopped him onto the pony. Gerd wanted to have a talk, but now wasn't the time. He was still recovering from the attack.

His dad said, "Giddyup! Let's run as fast as the four winds! " as he struck the pony with his silver-handled jockey whip. He used a jockey whip because in a horse, he looked for speed and stamina. Buttercup has both. He mainly used it to make the horse go faster; at any other time, he didn't use it.

"We're two days east from here to the sacred site," his dad said, though it wasn't clear who he was talking to; Gerd wasn't listening.

The pony took off at a canter[2]

And, just like that, they took off, leaving their straw hut.

His dad apparently always kept 2 days' worth of food in his bag. He said it was for 'emergency use. ' If the Germuns weren't the Germuns, that would sound a little… scaredycatty… But the Germuns being the Germuns, it made perfect sense.

Gerd watched the terrain go by. The day passed pretty fast, with the horses going to a canter. Eventually, the horses slowed to a trot. They kept going until nightfall, later, even. Then, they made camp and rested.

While Gerd slept, Gage stayed awake, talking to the horses. He soothed them, but also talked about himself, his background.

"How are you doing? Today was *completely so amazing!* Oh, yeah, we almost died, but oh well," Gage seemed to be talking to them as if they were people.

Then, his face hardened. "I'm sorry," Gage whispered, "She would've known what to say. You know she would. I never do… never."

Next, he went into the tent and, with much care, checked all over Gerd's body to check for injuries. There were none.

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[2] A canter is the third level of horse speed, which can range on the horse, but the average is 12-15 MPH(though these horses, which are more agile, could possibly go faster at a canter because a gallop would be substantially more)

"Good. We made it out of that hassle, huh? Not like last time. This time, it ended okay," Gage whispered. It was almost indistinct because he didn't want Gerd to wake up.

Journal Entry: Reasoning for the weapons. Date: 6 AGW

The second day. I now have 4 days, including today, until they put me in a pot of oil. I have to be brief, but I will explain the reasoning for the weapons the Germuns receive. Daggers come in handy: They're good melee and ranged, but the other two weapons, the longbow and twin rapiers do too. So, why the daggers? The daggers can be easily poisoned, thrown, and they have good defense. They are light, making them a lethal hunting tool. No Germun uses spears to hunt. Germuns consider spears for weaklings. Every Germun must have a bow to attack from a distance. Alas, the rapiers are the trickiest part. The rapier that isn't enchanted is to deflect a hunter of these magical items, to confuse them. The user can hand over the non-enchanted rapier to the hunter. The second is much more complex. I only hold the information on how this works.

Gerd woke up.

The sun still had not risen over the horizon, and, at first, Gerd thought he was still in his beautiful straw house. And then, he remembered. He remembered everything: his 4444th day, his dad's absence, the attack, and them leaving their home.

He got up early. His dad was already up, preparing breakfast, with a worried expression on his face.

He muttered something.

Gerd came up to him and asked, "What?"

"Soon we'll have to hunt", was his dad's response.

Suddenly, his dad turned his head sharply.

"Son, we have to have a talk", he said in a low, stone voice. He looked worried.

"The first thing", his dad said, raising one finger. "You are not to call me dad. We are Germuns, you now must call me Gage.".

His dad paused, and then he raised a second finger. "Second, your weapons are in my pack. You will receive them as soon as we arrive.", he continued.

Gerd had tons of questions pounding at the end of his brain, but he asked the most obvious one.

The one that would be the hardest to answer, most probably. "Who was that intruder?" he asked.

First, his dad acted as though he hadn't heard him.

"We'll get there in two days," he said.

"Da—Gage," Gerd paused, "Who was that?"

But his dad didn't respond to him.

"Buttercup, Dan, there's a field over there! A field of pure grass! Amazing grass!" Gage said to the ponies, in a smooth, sweet, rare voice, as he released the cavalry. Buttercup is the pony, and Dan is the horse.

The cavalry left to the green, grassy, pure fields to pasteurize.

Gage and Gerd ate breakfast. It was really crappy- squished, frozen, and impure, but it was food. Gerd was really hungry; all the hassles had made him that hungry.

"You're more hungry than I, take it, please," Gage said.

Gage always gave all his food away. Gerd didn't know why.

"Gage! Who was that?" Gerd repeated his question.

"Soon we'll have to hunt," Gage repeated and continued, as if Gerds' question hadn't even been processed.

Gerd was about to pester him again when a group of cavalrymen pulled up and seemed to be headed towards them. They came from the north.

They were heavy; they had shiny armour, made out of iron, all around. The horses also had armour: a chestplate, heavy iron footholds, and armour all over their legs.

Gerd also distinguished a shield held by the horsemen. It was made out of smelted iron, with carvings edged into the middle. In the middle of the shield, there was a golden crest made out of gold and silver, possibly with some edge of iron in it. The crest was a castle with two swords around it, intercrossed, and a dragon that was flying over it. On their backs, there was a great sword. On the handle was the same crest.

There were an estimated 20 horsemen. Even if our heroes started shooting their arrows now, they would never kill them all.

Heart racing, thoughts whistling, Gage decided to flee. Their horses were extremely agile, unlike the other ones. He whistled.

Dan turned his head but didn't set off. Buttercup, on the other hand, set off at a gallop towards Gerd and Gage. Gage hopped on with expertise, and Gerd hustled on as fast as he could.

"Giddup", Gage said, as he whipped Buttercup. Buttercup took off at a gallop, heading east.

Gage whistled again.

This time, Dan did take off. He took off in the direction that Buttercup was going. Little did they know that, behind the heavy cavalry, there was light cavalry, with very agile horses. All of them are equipped with bows.

The light cavalry took off.

"Come on, let's go," hollered a commander.

"*Holy shit!*" Gage cursed. "Our horses are much faster than any other, but they have bows,".

They were on the plains, so they were an easy target. Up ahead, there was a forest. If they could get to the forest, they would have to slow down, but they would be a much harder target. They were an estimated 100 feet away from it.

Gage whipped Buttercup. She accelerated.

80 ft.

The first round of arrows came.

Arrows, coming straight at them… A straight line of death, wherever you looked at it. The first one failed miserably.

"Who just shot that? When I find out you're getting out of this army! We only take the best of the best! STUPID FOOLS!" a commander's voice hollered.

Several arrows followed after the retort. One was headed directly at Gage.

"NO!" Gage shouted.

The arrow went directly at him. It seemed to hang for a moment in the air and then turned direction.

'Wind, ' Gerd thought. But it seemed as if… Gerd wiped the idea from his mind.

60 feet.

They kept going, faster and faster.

Another arrow was headed towards Gerd. He yelped. Buttercup got scared and started going wild. She went in every direction, and suddenly, they were going south. However, the arrow flew straight past the nose of Gerd, and there were woods an estimated 50 feet away, still.

Dan, distorted by the scardiness of his partner, turned to follow her.

50 feet.

Dan started to fall behind.

An arrow was directed at the black horse. The black horse had gone scared and was galloping in every direction.

Another arrow was directed at Buttercup, but she was pretty far away, and the arrow was redirected by the wind.

20 feet.

They were gradually leaving them behind, though Dan was still out of his mind. The light cavalry didn't bother to go after him; it was them who they were focused on

Arrived.

Now that they were in the forest, they had to slow. This meant that the heavy cavalry would get close. Their horses weren't used to a forest; rough terrain, yes, but all of the bugs coming at them was a lot for Buttercup. Buttercup started to slow.

Gage whipped her, and she maintained the pace, but didn't go faster.

"*Damm!* At this pace, the heavy cavalry will catch up," Gage cussed, as he pulled out an arrow and firmed it in the bow. He aimed at some of the light cavalry coming in.

He shot.

Underbrush, passed right above. Tree, how did that not hit? Almost at horseman…Tree!

The arrow crashed into the tree, but was close enough to the horse to scare it. It left the battle running, as the horseman lost his balance and fell. His longbow snapped, and he got run over by his horse. I almost felt sorry for him.

Buttercup kept trotting.

The light cavalry pursuing them also had to slow; they had reached the forest.

The light horsemen *could* fire, but all they would achieve is to waste arrows. All the growth would stop it.

Gage, on the other hand, could use his magic to center the target. Even so, it's difficult, but achievable.

The heavy cavalry was starting to get closer to the forest. They were heavy, but they were still cavalry.

Gage, still on Buttercup, who was still trotting, pulled out another arrow. He firmed it in his longbow and aimed at one of the light cavalry.

'Not too firm. Relax. Calculate wind. Calculate underbrush. Follow through.'

Gage released.

Clear path, clear path, tree, rejected by wind, at horsemen.

It hit one of the horsemen right in the chest, and he went down with a *groan*. His horse fled at a gallop north.

They were down to eight horsemen, who, as they got closer, pulled out throwing daggers.

The daggers were denser than arrows; they would cut through the underbrush if they got close enough.

Gage pulled out another arrow.

'Not too firm. Relax. Calculate wind. Calculate underbrush. Calculate trees. Follow through.'

Gage released.

Good, underbrush! Hit.

'Damn it!'

Gage's arrow hit the underbrush and fell.

Suddenly, a gap opened in the forest. About 350 feet ahead, the forest broke into plains.

This wasn't good news. When they reached the plains, they could fire arrows… Once they caught up. If they could get out of firing distance on the plains, that was their way out.

Gage whipped Buttercup and, sensing hope, started to trot faster. Her trot turned into a canter, though not a gallop; she would trip and fall. Soon, they were on the plains.

That's when Buttercup broke into a gallop. She galloped, and galloped and galloped. For miles!

"WOOHOO! At this pace, they'll never catch up!" Gerd whooped.

There was one problem, though. Dan had been left behind.

"We could go back and get him, though, then we run the risk of getting caught. We can get one at the sacred site." Gage said, with a tinge of sadness in his voice.

They kept galloping, and galloping.

"Soon, Buttercup will get tired. She probably can't keep this pace for long." Gage commented.

As if he had predicted the future, Buttercup slowed.

"We're probably a good 30-40 miles ahead." Gage reasoned, "Eventually, they'll have to slow, too. We're probably good in that sense. We'll make a few traps."

First, they collected sticks. Next, they sacrificed some apples and put them above the grass that could hold the weight of the apples and grass, but not a whole horse. It would fall into a well. The rider and horse would drown. When they got down there, the sticks would ricochet thanks to an avalanche. They would hit the light horsemen and injure them. Then they turned some sticks into stakes using their daggers, dug another hole, sacrificed a few more apples, and then stuck the stakes into the hole, sharp side up. They did this while Buttercup pasteurized and rested. Once the trap was done, they left at a canter. Soon, night fell, and they couldn't continue; there was no moon, and thus, they couldn't see at all.

"We'll eat a little now," Gage said, as he got some food out. "We're low, but oh well."

Gage got it out. It was better in comparison to breakfast; Gage had apparently taken the bottom of the bag in breakfast, and now he apparently took the top, so at least it wasn't squished. Gage didn't eat much. He ate a little and pushed the rest to Gerd.

"You deserve this more than I, Gerd. Eat it," Gage said, pushing his food to Gerd.

They settled down and rested.

It was still dark when they woke up and left.

Journal Entry

I only have three days… I can tell the whole story of the rapiers and all, but that would take a lot of time… time I don't have. Instead, I will speak of the Germuns magic. The Germuns magic is quite complex. They have an internal energy reserve, like a lake. Every time they use their magic, the lake grows. But the water also decreases. It rains hard on their lake, and the magic is restored when they rest. If they want to continue to use their magic, even if their lake is empty, they may use their vital energy. If their vital energy runs out, they, well… they perish. The more complex the spell, or if it has more effect than the others, it drains their lake further.

"Today, we'll arrive at the sacred site," Gage said.

"Okay", responded Gerd. "What are we going to do when we get there?"

"The spirits will hand you your magic. They'll give you your enchanted rapier, and I'll give you your other weapons." Gage responded.

"Giddyup," Gage whipped Buttercup.

That day, they arrived at the 'sacred site'

As they rode, Gerd thought. He thought about miscellaneous stuff, and he was in pretty big shock thanks to the attack. But he just kept thinking.

Buttercup's hooves dragged by the second day. Even Gage looked worn down—his hair clung to his face, and he hadn't smiled in hours. Gerd's legs ached. He'd never sat on a saddle so long. But the forest broke into plains, and up ahead, gray shapes lined the horizon.

They got there at noon. As they arrived, Gerd noticed something gray. Bodies littered the floor.

"What happened here? Some type of massacre!" Gerd screamed.

He just couldn't think. There were dead children. Even babies. Whatever came was heartless. Buttercup kept trotting through the town, but wherever they went, there were dead bodies.

"No. No! This wasn't how it was supposed to go! They can ruin everything else, but not your magic. NO! This is terrible!" Gage shouted.

Gerd agreed: It was terrible. But his magic was exactly the opposite of what he was thinking of as 'terrible'.

"HOW COULD YOU BE THINKING OF MY MAGIC!? THESE PEOPLE ARE DEAD!! MY MAGIC IS THE LEAST IMPORTANT THING!" Gerd was out of his mind. How could Gage think about his magic right now? Heartless.

Gage thought about it for a minute. For a second, he was sure he was about to say, *"It's all we have left. If we don't have this… Then what do we have?"*

He was secure that he was going to say it. He opened his mouth… But no volume came out. He opened his mouth, and this time his vocal cords decided to cooperate… With the bad part of his brain, of course, and he instead said: "Actually, for you," Gage's voice paused for a second. It broke up, and for a moment, he looked as though he would change his mind, but then continued. "The most important thing is your magic. Remember that."

Gerd got off Buttercup and ran.

He stepped on the bodies and couldn't take it anymore. He screamed.

Suddenly, a tornado was unleashed around Gerd. As he ran, it circled around him. He lifted off the ground and was no longer standing on top of the bodies. Suddenly, he was elsewhere. He couldn't see anything, no colors. He could feel feelings, though. He could see shapes and colors through feelings. He felt things that nobody dared feel. He went beyond what humans thought about. He felt… time. Time unfolding. And he saw.

'Clear, blue. Peace. Everything is peaceful.'

But then, red illuminated everything.

'Red, war'

And then, the red ceased but was still there. A world full of fights and control over one another. Some extremely wealthy, but only one or two out of billions. The rest are dirt poor. And then, the vision cut out, and Gerd was cruising.

He seemed to be able to control where the tornado took him. It wasn't stopping, though. Then, he was on Buttercup's back. Gage looked at him, first with surprise, then with praise, and then he looked delighted.

"Gage, please take that smile off your face. WE'RE SURROUNDED BY DEAD PEOPLE!"

"Yeah, whatever, but you claimed your magic! And you're a natural! By the way, that's called TORNADO. I always wanted to do it, but I was the wrong magic type. From what I hear, it's really rare to get that type of magic, and when you do, it's not very strong. But that was powerful, and very! Plus, it's your first try, dude! This is something to celebrate!" Gage praised

"Gage, we're literally surrounded by dead people. What happened? And no! It's *not* time to celebrate at all!!"

By then, Gage had pulled out a book. It is titled *How Kermun Functioned BGW and AGW*

"You'll have to read this later. It's a classic, nobody really knows who wrote it," Gage said.

Gerd observed the book intensely. It was old, and the pages were yellow. The cover was worn leather. The pages were handwritten, seemingly with black ink.

"And, since you opened your magic, you will get this book," Gage said as he pulled out yet another book. This book looked newer, but still pretty old. It was titled *Different Types of Mages and What They Do*

"Nobody knows who wrote this one, either," Gage said, as he pulled two books from his bag. Gage gave the books to Gerd.

These weren't old at all, but they still didn't have an author inscribed on them. The title was *Awakening Your Inner Magic: A Guide* and *History of Kermun at a Glance.*

"So yeah, all yours. Examine them closely. Someday, they might be the difference between living or dying, succeeding or failing. I wanted to give you these at the right moment. Not like this. It's my only option, though." Gage said.

"Gage, what happened here?" Gerd suddenly changed the subject.

"Most likely the Great Empire. They probably knew we were coming here," Gage responded.

"Does that mean that they know we are here?" asked Gerd.

"Most likely. We may have to run. They must, one way or another. The guys we lost back in the forest probably told the Great Empire about us."

"So, when will they catch up?" Gerd asked.

"I don't know. It depends on what they send. They may send a small group, and be faster, but that would mean they would be easier to fight off. They might send a big group that's heavier, but then they would be slower. They might also send both. For now, let's eat." Gage responded as he settled down onto one of the only spots that wasn't littered with bodies.

"You eat all of my portion. I'm not hungry," Gage said.

"Are you sure? You never eat!" Gerd responded.

"I'm sure. Your blood is more valuable than mine, after all, you're young." Gage insisted.

Gerd looked worried but nodded. He started eating, then paused, confused.

"Why do you always give your food away?"

"Do you think I look like I don't care? Just eat your food!" Gage responded.

"Yes, sir," Gerd said.

Gerd ate the remainder of the food. Next, he opened *How Kermun Functioned Before and After the Great War*.

It was really just history; nothing surprised him in it. In fact, he had seen some of it in his vision of feelings and colors. Before, everything was peaceful, and no one person was more powerful than another. Then, as had happened in his vision, somebody came to the uprising. A bad, foolish, selfish person. They raised an army. Next, the Great War. It emphasized that not much is known about it. As Gerd was reading, a yellowed page slid out. The page had a huge heading, titled **The Prophecy of Kermun.** Gerd read every line with the utmost precision, and gathered his last wit, but it was just nonsense! It read:

When the last light bends to shadow, and the river runs red with silence,
The cursed will stir, beneath broken stars.

He shall rise not from throne nor temple,
But from ash, and straw, and the weight of too many goodbyes.

Twin fangs bound to soul and breath shall gleam in night,
And wind shall answer to the blood of a vanished name.

With the ghost of a king at his side, the child shall walk where none return—
Over dead lands, into the mouth of wrath.

He will not be known until the sword sings,
And the throne bleeds.

And then, silence will die.
And peace will know its name again.

Gerd swallowed. *'Am I really going by gibberish?'* he asked himself. I mean, sure, it's Kermish, but… It felt like a completely different thing. Gage. He would help him find out.

But there's also… *'Am I really going to do this? What do I gain?'* That was the thought that almost made him back out. But then, he thought about the last part of the prophecy. *'Peace will know its name again. '* That was it. Peace would reign. That was what made him reconsider. And, because of that, he was going to find out whatever this meant. He decided to consult his sources.

"Gage, can you help me decode this?" Gerd shouted to Gage.

Gage walked over.

"Is it acting up? You know, it's only in our language in the right hands." Gage responded.

"Well, you might as well call it a different language," Gerd muttered.

"Let me see it," Gage ordered, and Gerd passed him the book.

"No, it's in Kermish. Ohhhh, you mean the text. It's some confusing prophecy!" Gage said.

Wind rustled through the trees, which made them even more nervous.

"The last line is obvious. But what about the '*When the last light bends to shadow, and the river runs red with silence*'?" Gerd asked as he rubbed his mother's clover fastly.

"*When the last light bends to shadow:* Maybe… Maybe it's a metaphor. Or maybe it's literal- a torch? Or maybe the last light is our hope. Hope… But hope for what? To go back to… before? Before the Great War? Or maybe… Let's read the next part. I wonder what it'll tell us. Maybe it'll give us a hint, maybe not. *And the river runs red with silence.* Silence could mean anything, from the silence of nature, to… to the silence of this dead that… that surrounds us. I don't know. Improbable anyone will know until the final moment. That is, we won't know… until it's too late." That was what Gage said.

"Gage, we must find out why all these people are dead. That mystery is impossible. Why the Great Empire would kill all these people isn't that obvious." Gerd urged.

"The Great Empire is cruel. The sooner you understand that, the better." Gage responded.

The Great Empire: Tiefling's POV

I am sick and tired of Father. He acts like I'm his slave. For all I know, I am. Sure, he's a king, but I am real, too. I may not become queen, but I'm still royalty. In fact, I wouldn't mind a revolution in that manner. Father would behead me if he heard that, but it's true. I'm sick and tired of this system where he gets all of the power. People bow down to my riches. But I am not rich. I have money, trillions of Kerms. But none of that matters, as I'm unimportant.

Gerd and Gage POV: A small town near the Great Kingdom

"What's the plan?" Gerd asked Gage.

"I guess I need to give you your weapons." Gage reached for something in his bag. As he grabbed it, he continued. "Ohhh! I also need to give you this!" Gage paused, then reached for another text.

Gage gave Gerd two rapiers, two daggers, a longbow, and two sets of twenty-four arrows.

"That's not what I was saying, Gage. What are we going to do?" Gerd prompted.

Gage sighed and looked at Gerd directly in the eye. "We need to kill the king. That's what we're going to do," he responded. "We're close to the Great Empire. Honestly, we need to hunt desperately. I say we hunt, come along with me. It's good stealth practice, and besides, I don't really trust you to… to stay alone here." Gage said.

"I'm pretty sure that there's woods close by… We'll go there."

And so, they gathered they're things and set off for the woods.

Gerd hadn't ever been hunting. He'd practiced stealth with his dad, and he knew how to cover his scent with the wind, not make any slight noise at all, all of the sweet stuff you need to know. Little did they know that in those moments, their death was being planned.

POV: Tiefling

Father called me to be his servant. His 'helper'. Like making food for him was being a helper, it was being a slave. Harumph! But as I bring the tea close, and knock on his door, he instead says, "Ah! Tiefling, my dear! I'm busy right now, just leave the tea at the door, please, my dear," He says in his most soothing and relaxed voice.

Oh, yeah, and there's that. Whenever there's somebody in front of him, he acts extraordinarily kind to me. But when the people go away… He's eviler than heck!

I do leave the tea at the door. I also leave myself at the door, and press my ear to the deluxe wood and gold that makes my dad's door.

"We have a problem. They have found the prophecy, and they will attempt to kill you, Your Majesty! So, I have it fixed. We just have to know their general location, then send an assassin at them. That is the only way. After all, they are the—" The general's talk was cut short by the raging king.

"Would you like to keep your tongue? How dare you talk of them in such an unprivate space! Continue, continue, but **do not use that name**," raged Father.

"Exactly, exactly, yes, Your Majesty! That's how it shall be! Anyway, they are pretty close to here, a day or two's trot north! Who shall we send?" the general asked.

"Reinforce the Kingdom in every corner. We don't want them getting in. As for the assassin or multiple assassins, send five to scout that area. We want them dead, understood? If you don't kill them, deep consequences await you," responded the king.

The general got up, and Tiefling ran away from the door. As the door opened, she was already out of sight. Who were these people, coming to kill Father? They're exactly what I need, but all they're going to do is get themselves killed. I must help them, if it can restore peace!

Then, I realized just how dangerous they could be. They could identify me as the enemy and try to kill me, or something worse. NO! I will never back out of this ever! Father must be shut down!

Quickly, I run to my room and start to form a plan. But they would have to get past Father's assassins, otherwise, they'd be dead meat before they got there.

They may die. They would still die free, unlike me. Besides, if they do die, I can handle it on my own. And since it's not in my hands, I can just ignore it completely.

Haunted Forest, Gage & Gerd

"For your first time actually hunting, not just collecting traps, we did pretty well!" Gage congratulated.

It was already starting to get dark out, but they had gotten two fat squirrels and a huge bunny! It would definitely be enough for a quarter of a fortnight.

"We can get a few miles in, but soon we'll have to rest," Gage said.

And, riding on Buttercup, they continued.

Gerd couldn't stop rubbing his mother's pendant. He was very nervous about it all.

The land flew by, and the miles stopped ticking. The sun wouldn't stop moving, and then it set.

"Well, I guess we have to stop here. Horses are tired, and we can barely see," Gage said.

As they settled and made camp, Gerd couldn't shake off the feeling he was being watched. He decided it was best to rest, but his eyelids wouldn't stay closed. Reluctantly, he pulled out one of the books Gage gave him. *History of Kermun At a Glance*. It wasn't very exciting. It told him the political ways the Great Empire came to power, and other important events that at some time would've been important but now were old and forgotten. Then, one page caught his attention. It was a picture… of what seemed to be his mom. It was old and ripped and scratchy, but it was her. And over it, a stamp. A creepy stamp. It read *Captured By Great Empire.* As Gerd looked closer, he saw another stamp, more faded. *Missing.*

What the heck had happened to his mom? Whenever he asked Gage, he just said it was an accident. But what sort of accident? And why did it happen?

But then, Gerd felt relieved. *'She's alive.'* It was true. And no matter what, Gerd was determined to find her.

Tiefling's POV

I have to find out who these people are. Once I do, I can join them in their goal. Father hadn't mentioned anything about them… Except for the mere notice of not mentioning it. And not mentioning it is a huge clue. I'll check with the Prophecy of Kermun to see if it adds up.

I look through all of my books on my huge and quantanious bookshelves. *How Kermun Functions Before and After Great War*. Right there! I set it on my desk and reread the prophecy. It would make sense that the person Father is trying to kill is a Germun, the Great Empire *absolutely loved* Germuns. Germuns came poor, rich, wild… Not many people knew you were a Germun. Unless… I pull out another text. *History of Kermun At a Glance*. And there it was. A beautiful lady, who was now an abandoned old slave in the dungeons. She was a Germun, and I'm not really sure why Father didn't directly kill her. She's our servant, and she respects Father, I guess. I have strict orders that I can't talk to her, which is a pity.

I know quite a lot about her, possibly more than anybody else. I know her secrets. No. I can't think about that. If I do, I might back out of this whole thing. Not happening!

Argg! If I could only interview her, I could get a few points in knowing who is coming. So, I have to persuade Father to let me see her. Father probably planned to do with me what he did with her. Den is 100% taking power, not me. Father says I'm unfit to rule. But then again, Father eats with his fingers. So. And, since he tells me not to, I'm going to do it. Or at least do something better, like overrule him and finally have checks and balances again.

Suddenly, a plan starts to form. What I need is information. The number one way to stay informed is to eavesdrop. Finally! Something I'm good at!

I head down to Father's room to see what he's doing, but he's just sipping the tea I made. Oh, and some champagne. He clearly doesn't see me, or if he does, he doesn't care. Probably he's too drunk.

Gerd & Gage's POV

Gerd was still restless after seeing that photo. Unlikely he'd ever sleep normally. Plus, he still couldn't shake the feeling that they were being watched. He decided it was best to find out some answers.

"Dad, Mom didn't die. The Great Empire took her." Gerd decided to go all direct.

"Yes. I wanted to give you those books at the right time. The right time has come for you to know the truth." Gage seriously thought about sharing the rest of his thoughts, but he couldn't bring himself to. He wanted to say that the real reason he was going on this quest wasn't because he wanted to kill the king. He wanted Gerd's mom back when he had failed to protect her from the attacks.

"But why would you give it to me now and not before? Sure, better late than never, but seriously!" Then, Gerd grimaced. "And now, I'm not calling you Gage! *Dad!*" he raged.

Gage tightened his glance. His shoulders sagged, and he looked sadder.

"I couldn't save her," Gage whispered back, but too low for Gerd to hear without paying extraordinary attention(he was too busy shouting at Gage).

Then, Gerd took a deep breath.

"We're going to get this over with, then find her, right?" He said.

That was exactly what Gage wanted. In fact, he didn't really care about killing the king. He cared about saving Gerd's mom. Gage just couldn't bring himself to say it.

Gerd shook his head. He couldn't get Gage to speak, so he decided to give himself another try at sleeping. This time, he could sleep. And he dreamt.

Suddenly, Gerd was in a torch-lit room. Ahead, he could see his mother, but he could also see the king. It was both things at the same time. He could feel that his mother was in the kingdom, on the throne. But there was also the king. And then he woke up, and it was morning.

"Come on, come on," Gage called, his voice weary but trying to sound upbeat. "Time to storm the king's castle. Liberation for all, or death to us."

So, they set off on their quest to assassinate the king.

The next day passed in a blur of tired hooves, wind-bent trees, squirrel and rabbit, and the constant ache of silence. Neither Gerd nor Gage spoke much. They didn't need to. The air between them was filled with unspoken thoughts, the kind that made the silence louder than a lion's roar.

On the first day, they stopped early to rest the horses, and Gage tossed Gerd a dagger.

"Throw it," he said simply. Gerd did. It hit the target—barely.

"Again." They practiced until the sun dipped below the horizon, and Gerd's arms were sore. Gage didn't praise, but he didn't criticize either.

That meant progress.

The next day, magic."Try the wind again," Gage said. "Not too hard. Focus on direction, not force."

Gerd held his hand to the breeze. He imagined the current curling, shifting. He focused on his inner lake, trying to open something. A hole. He grabbed the hole, trying to expand it, so as to not lose it, and some of his water came out.

A gust kicked up some dirt, enough to feel but not to throw anyone off balance. Gerd hadn't the slightest idea of how he'd made a whole tornado back there. "Better," Gage admitted.

They rode, they trained, they camped. They didn't talk about what was coming. They didn't need to. It was written in their silence, in the sweat from practice, in the look Gerd caught once, Gage staring at the pendant in Gerd's hand when he thought Gerd wasn't looking. By the end of the second day, Gerd could land half his dagger throws and call a breeze at will. He was ready—or maybe close enough.

Gerd leaned forward into Buttercup's mane, remembering when his mother used to braid it with flowers. It had only happened once, but the memory clung to him like the wind. Ahh, how he longed for that to be real again!

"We're almost here!" said Gage.

"Oh, finally!" sighed Gerd.

But then, an arrow whizzed past their face, so close they could feel the wind from it.

"I knew it! I just knew we were having too much good luck for it to be true," Gerd muttered, his voice half-laugh, half-terror.

Gage didn't respond. He turned in the saddle slowly, eyes narrowing. "Just one," he muttered, voice low and sharp. Then, three more sprang out from behind the first one, and Gage sighed.

"Let me handle this," said Gage.

And with that, he closed his eyes. A huge fireball obliterated two of the horsemen. They screamed and shouted in horror, then fell down dead. But Gage was tired. The spell had consumed much of his innate energy.

Of course, Gage could fight, but he wouldn't be as good as before. Gage had supposed his fireball would either kill more or

The battle would turn if Gerd couldn't hold the ground. Gerd- He thought he would be ready for anything. And he quite possibly was. Gerd ferociously rubbed his mother's clover.

Gerd pulled out his longbow. He had practiced this. He was ready. Gerd put an arrow in his bow and aimed.

'Relax. Not too firm. Pull back. Calculate wind. Release. Follow through.'

His arrow was directly aimed at the horsemen, but then the wind redirected the arrow.

'NO!'

Gerd closed his eyes and focused. He tried to summon his inner lake, to use it and take the tornado. At first, he felt nothing. *'Focus!'*

Gerd tried harder and then felt a pull. He tried to grab on tighter to the pull, to not only grab on to the pull, but to climb up it. He closed his eyes.

This was all or nothing. Gerd didn't know it, but the remaining horsemen had now pulled out an arrow and were pointing it at Gerd. Gage kept accelerating Buttercup, but… Buttercup was tired from the long trek. The horses were gaining on them. That was not a good sign at all. If they caught up… They could kill Buttercup and use melee weapons.

Gerd had tugged up the rope, and then he felt… and an opening. It was all too confusing. It was there, not there… It was like… But no, he could feel it. He could feel an opening. It was in his magic. He could feel his magic spilling out. And that was when he flew. He flew. He was free as a bird. At that moment, he wasn't conscious of the arrow that passed right under him, or the fact that there was wind all around him. He was only focused on keeping it going. His innate desire controlled where it went. And his innate desire made him go towards the horsemen, one after another, and rip them up into bloody little bits. It felt good for a while. Then, Gerd fell to the ground, exhausted and hurt.

Gage turned Buttercup around, towards Gerd. Gerd couldn't move. Fatigue feasted on his body and mind, and he was suddenly aware of his surroundings, but felt powerless about how he could change them.

Buttercup approached Gerd. Gage picked him up and put him on her back like he was a feather.

"I would have preferred to have reached there today, but I see that it would be impossible to get out alive and well if we go like this," Gage said.

Gerd didn't respond. He couldn't.

"Well, I guess we can get started by eatin' our butts off!" Gage said, pulling out the last of the bunnies. They still had one squirrel, but it was thin. The more you let things sit,

the lower the quality, so they ate(or sold) the better quality first. By the time you came to eat the last one, it was pretty disgusting, but less actual quality was lost.

It felt like a 3000-mile marathon just to chew and swallow. He did a huge effort, though, and ate. Next, he fell asleep, and if he wasn't rolling around in his sleep, he would be mistaken for dead.

Tiefling's POV

If Father is intoxicated, I might be able to squeeze out a few answers. On the other hand, it's pretty risky, because maybe Father hasn't drunk enough. He may trick me, tell half-truths, or even give me false info. But if he's intoxicated at level 500, then I could get valuable answers. Father started shaking. That probably means he's drunk, like level 1000 at least. And that is what makes me do one of the worst decisions I've ever made. I almost didn't notice the pills that made him sober, on his desk. I considered taking away his pills, but then he'd *absolutely* notice that something was wrong. Although he may be drunk now, in no moment is he dumb. Which is what makes him so dangerous.

I walk in and start the so-called "interviewing".

"Your Majesty," I'm going to call him what almost all people call him for him to not sum 1+1(which he can't do because he is a stupidhead(being a stupidhead is *not* the same thing as being dumb(still means he can't add 1+1))) and take his pills. "Who were those people you were trying to murder?" I ask.

"My— My— Ene— Enem— Enemy's" Father stutters.

Uh-oh. He's so drunk it's hard for him to say two easy words.

"Yeah, but who, as in what is their name?" I prompt.

"G-Ge- Ger- Gerd a- an- and G-Ga-Gag-Gage Germun," he responds.

Ha! I knew it! I knew all along that it was a Germun!

"Why do you wish to see them dead?" I press.

"T-To e-eli- elimi—" His message was cut short by a ringing. It all happened so fast. Father grabbed his pills and swallowed them. Immediately, fire manifests in his eyes.

"**GET OUT OF THIS PLACE RIGHT NOW!**" Father's roar broke all the windows.

I quickly ran out of his room, unwilling for Father to become dangerous. It only happened once. I tell myself that. When I was young, 5, maybe, Father tried to stab me with a dagger.

That day, he had been extraordinarily angry.

I got extremely (un)useful info today. I mean, I know who is trying to kill Father, but it is unlikely to help.

I head up to my room on the 6th floor.

Gerd and Gage's POV

Gerd awoke to the sound of birds singing lullabies.

"Come on, come on! Today we're going to kill the king in his extravagant bedchamber! Liberation for all, or death to us!" Gage sung. He sang like he felt tired or was not in the best mood. He still sang, even if it sounded sassy. And that was a huge upgrade from yesterday. For some reason, everyone was in a singing mood. Gerd had to admit, he was more excited than yesterday, and exponentially more excited than last night. One could even say that they were (half) elated!

Quickly, Gage hopped onto Buttercup, patted her back to signal to Gerd to hop on. Gerd, with a good mood, obeyed.

"Just because today's a good day doesn't mean we don't have to be careful. Not at all. Listen, in the kingdom, it's really dangerous. No lollygagging. Don't look anyone in the eyes. Look down. And try to act like you're from there." Gage recommended, as he took out the breakfast.

"Good idea!" Gerd responded. "My lake is much higher today. It must have grown deeper.

"Yes— That is what happens. When you use magic, your lake grows deeper," said Gage.

Gage actually ate that morning. Gerd ate his share, and Gage ate his. It was the first time in months that Gage had eaten.

And with that, Gage whipped Buttercup, and she took off, headed towards the kingdom.

When they arrived at the kingdom, it was almost noon. Time was certainly not in their favor.

As they approached the entrance to the kingdom, there was something that could not be erased from memory. The walls towered 50 ft over the ground. Along the walls at the bottom were dotted with guards and soldiers. Above, on the walls, there were holes in the wall that just ended in stone, with soldiers with ready longbows.

Gerd and Gage noticed the entrance. Hundreds of people crowded it, traders, nobles, mercenaries… The list goes on.

"There is no human way to get through there without being noticed and antagonized. We'll have to find an alternative way to infiltrate the kingdom." Gage noticed, frustration boiling in his voice.

They looked for an alternative entrance. They found none from their current position, but they couldn't get any closer because then they'd definitely be noticed.

That was, until Gage pulled out a spyglass.

"Now. Why on Kermun would *you* have a spyglass?! Where did you get it, and why do you just 'happen' to carry it around all the time?" Gerd asked, with a playful edge in his voice. Of course, curiosity had won the war; the mystery of his dad having a spyglass was crazy, but Gerd was glad Gage had it; it had literally saved them in that moment.

"Don't see anything from this angle, but the walls are extremely large. We should go look somewhere else." Gage reported, redirecting Buttercup around the walls.

"Gage, I was thinking… How do those soldiers get up there, on the walls? There has to be something, a ladder, from the inside of the kingdom. Otherwise… They wouldn't be able to get up there." Gerd noticed.

"That might be our only way… But we should definitely scan the walls, just in case. Besides, how would *we* get up there?" Gage asked.

Gerd didn't have an answer. They kept going around the walls, looking for something, but they didn't. They were about halfway through the walls when Gerd had a breakthrough.

"I could use my tornado! I can fly with that thing, you know!" he said.

"What about me and Buttercup? You just gonna leave us down here?" Gage countered.

"Leave Buttercup here, you ride with me!" Gerd responded.

"Yeah, like I can just BOOM, I'm riding with you. I don't have your magic type, but I don't think you can just do that," Gage said.

"Well, it better, cuz it's our only way. Besides, if there's anything we can learn from books, it's this." Gerd argued.

"Take a look at that book, see what it teaches you. I highly doubt that even if there is a spell that complex, you have enough lake to do it. And even if you do… You'd arrive exhausted when we still have to do all of the fighting." Gage kept his argument.

"What, do you have a better idea?" Gerd asked.

Gage sighed and gave in. "No. I guess I don't. First step, learn that spell. By the time you do, it'll be night. I wanted to kill the king today, but I see we have no choice. Doing it anyways would be foolish. We can't afford to be foolish; we'll lose our lives."

By then, they had made it all around the Great Wall. Nothing.

Gage led Buttercup to the plains, about half a mile away. Enough so that they didn't see them, but not enough for them to have to go on a whole journey to get back there.

Buttercup went to pasteurize, and Gerd settled down, reading *Different Types of Mages and What They Do* and *Awakening Your Inner Magic: A Guide*. He decided to start

on *Different Types of Mages and What They Do*. He opened it up and looked for the wind mage. He started reading.

Tiefling's POV

Nobody circles the walls anymore. I don't know who they were; they were too far away, but they looked like the supposed 'Gerd and Gage'.

Came to kill Father. I don't know how they're going to get in, but they had enough logic to not go through the Great Entrance. Unless they discovered the weakness.

They were circling the walls, the younger one with a book in front. Apparently, the older one had a spyglass and was checking for entrances on the walls, at the bottom. There were none. Also, they seemed to be arguing. Maybe the younger one had found the weakness, but the older one was against it, or vice versa. It would explain the book… But then again, they would have to actually fly up there. Only possible with either teleportation or wind magic. Both were extremely rare. Still, didn't the prophecy call for something maybe, ahh, a little, *hrmm* rare? Besides, the prophecy *legit* included wind: *And wind shall answer to the blood of a vanished name.* But that could mean anything. A coincidence, most likely. But still. Whoever the Chosen was, if they were alive, would have wind magic. But… to use that spell, you need to know the Old Language. Almost nobody knows it. Maybe it wasn't these guys, but there's a pretty big chance it is. And then… Then there's the other prophecy. That they fail, but rise again:

If the throne does not bleed, the wound will deepen.
The child will fall, but not break.
The breath of the storm shall flicker—then burn anew.
What is lost shall rise when the forgotten name is spoken.
Peace will wait, unheard, but not undone.

This one I found had different lines sprawled across ancient textbooks. I only put them together how it made sense to me. It could all be a big coincidence, but I know not. Prophecies can twist and turn, but they never lie. Especially since it was in many textbooks. *And* because Varrin told me. Varrin the wise, I often joked to myself. He was the librarian, an old assassin who quit. However, at that time, Grandfather was ruling. Grandfather and Varrin were close friends. Grandfather decided to leave Varrin be, and Father hasn't changed that. Probably because he needs a librarian/guard of the books.

And, the classic pessimistic one. They fail and die(womp-womp):

If the throne does not bleed, the silence shall feast.

The cursed will forget their names.
Wind shall die in stillness.
The last light shall fold into shadow,
And peace shall never know its name again.

The pessimistic one isn't written down. It's more of a rumor, something dark that eats everybody from the inside. A whisper, something you fear but can't seem to grasp. This one was my version of it.

Which of these will come is like finding out the Riemann Hypothesis. Impossible, especially without more data.

Gerd & Gage's POV

"Here it is! '*Sharing Wind Magic for Transport*'. Apparently, I have to say these words." Gerd tilted the book so Gage could see them. They were: '*duo populus transportari vento magicae*', written in faded ink. "There isn't much info on this spell. It seems to be blocked off." Gerd continued.

"If you don't know how much energy a spell is going to take, better not do it. Besides, there are armoured people up there. How do you plan to kill them? Sure, we could use the rapiers, but then they'd see it coming and shout." Gage critiqued.

"My wind will rip them up!" Gerd said enthusiastically. "As for the energy… I don't know. I just don't know. If you could… Transfer lake, then… Maybe?" Gerd continued, not so enthusiastically this time.

"Alas, you can transfer the lake. But you wouldn't just have access to my lake. You would have access to my thoughts, and I to yours. In essence, we would have intertwined souls. And also… If I die, you die; you die, and I also die. Not metaphorically, literally. *Also*, we can't kill the guys using '*duo populus transportari vento magicae*'. We can only fly with that. The wind carries us, but it's not a *tornado*. I don't have wind magic, but I know my share of the Old Language." Gage said.

"So, if our only way is to intertwine, why don't we do it?" Gerd asked.

"I'm not… I can't…" Gage started, then sighed. "Whatever," he finally gave in. "We'll intertwine tomorrow morning at the guard switch. We then sneak down before they notice us. The king's bedchamber is on the 4th floor, right here." Gage said, pointing at a map of the Kingdom. Wherever he got it was a mystery, but it helped them.

They made camp and rested.

Rustling awoke Gerd. First, he felt panicked, then realized it was just Gage.

"So… How do we intertwine, again?" Gerd asked.

"Well… Okay. We both say these words at the same time. After them, you say *Vadium*, and I say *yac*. The beginning words are: *Te coniungo, cogitationes nostrae unum sunt, nos duo*. Okay, go."

They both said it at the same time. A long second passed, and then Gerd felt… Pain. Not hurt, guilt. And weight. Weight too heavy for someone to carry. And then, it disappeared. Not entirely, but most of it.

Then, Gerd felt Gage's lake. It was more like an ocean than a lake. How had Gage been exhausted making a fireball? It was a mystery.

They could communicate through thoughts. Gerd felt a sudden intrusion.

'Are we doing this?' Gage thought.

'Yes! The king shall die!' Gerd thought back.

They weren't close to each other, but they could read each other's minds. It was almost creepy. They could see two different things through Gage's eyes and Gerd's eyes.

They hopped onto Buttercup and rode until they were at a tree, about 500 ft away from the entrance they were going to break through.

They walked toward the entrance until they were about 300 ft away, and then they both mentally agreed that they would start here. The guards looked around and went in through the stone slab. *Guard break.* The clock was ticking.

Gage passed the words, Gerd said them.

"*Duo populus transportari vento magicae"* Gerd murmured.

Suddenly, the wind picked up Gerd and Gage and carried them up. Gerd could control it, even though it went *fast*. Like, fast fast. They traveled the 300 feet in about 3 seconds.

The second they landed, Gage pushed away from the bond they had formed. Suddenly, Gerd was Gerd, and Gage was Gage. No intertwines.

Gerd's lake felt slightly emptied, but significantly less than he had expected.

They quickly went down the stairs.

"Gage, do you still have that map?" Gerd whispered.

"Yes. We are currently right here," Gage pointed to a point on the map, "On the eighth floor. The stairs are right here. We'll go there."

They headed towards the stairs… And heard footsteps coming up them.

Quickly, they stepped into a door slab. The guards passed right through them. Once they turned the corner, they decided it was safe enough to go. They went down. Now on the seventh floor. The seventh floor was uneventful.

As they stepped onto the sixth floor, they bumped right into some guards.

"Who are you?" they asked in a deep, sharp tone.

They had iron spears, and the shield with the same design they had seen on the shields of the heavy cavalry in the forest.

"If you'll excuse us… We're taking a tour… We're new guards here, you see." Gage lied.

"Don't remember hiring peasants," the guard growled. "Get out. Now."

"It's true. We're new guards here… And your life is very busy, I don't expect you to know everything," Gerd backed Gage's lie up.

"Not an excuse. We train for war, not excuses. You look weak.". There's no way you passed the exam." The guard raised his voice.

"Well, you see… We aren't gifted in strength, but in dexterity. We did pass that test. Please let us by." Gage pressed,

"GO! NOW!" the guard said, as he raised his iron spear.

Gage drew his intertwined rapier. "If it's a fight you want... then let's finish it."

The guard called for help, and two more guards armed with spears came.

The first guard took a shot at Gage with his spear. Gage easily dodged. He had two options. Melee or intertwined rapier. Quick thinking was very valuable. He was running out of time; the guards were raising their spears again. Pure adrenaline powered his thoughts, and he let the intertwined rapier fly. It targeted the first guard and hit. The rapier was stuck. Gage *could* reclaim it, but then he'd be pierced by one of the spears. Heart racing, Gage decided to let it be and use his other weapons.

The hit guard fell. Hits from an intertwined rapier were *always* lethal.

Gerd raised a dagger. Adrenaline, pure, pounded at his brain. He didn't think. His adrenaline did, and it is much faster at deciding than his brain fighting. Gerd aimed and threw. The guard saw it and moved his shield. The dagger bounced off.

Heart racing, Gage took out his other rapier, the normal one. He lunged at a guard, with a valid aim, powered by the *FIGHT* section of his brain, but the guard redirected his shield to block it. But Gage lunged again, in a different spot, near his legs. The adrenaline kept him firing. The shield came a little too late. The guard was bleeding heavily on his leg, but kept fighting, furious.

Gerd took out his second dagger and focused, well, at least as much as he could, as was expected in fights like this one. Since the guard who was bleeding was blinded by pain,

he decided to focus on him. He aimed, hand clenched extra tight on his dagger right before he let it go, the sweat on it… And hit the guard in the back. The guard who was hit redirected his attention towards Gerd.

The guard who wasn't hit took Gage. Gage focused his rapier… It was iron v. iron, calculated and controlled adrenaline v. rage. The guard who had chosen Gage lunged and threw his spear at Gage. Gage quickly ducked. The guy didn't have a weapon… Or so he thought, until the guard pulled out a great sword.

Of course he had a sword! Gage gritted his teeth. *Why wouldn't he?* Gage thought, as sweat bathed his forehead.

Meanwhile, the battle of the injured guard v. Gerd was going good for Gerd. He had managed to hit the guard in one more spot, and the guard was losing consciousness thanks to the blood loss. The guard lunged, a final attempt to hit Gerd. Gerd saw it coming, in slow-mo. His instincts took over, and he ducked. The guard had missed. Then, he fell back. Not dead, unconscious.

Between Gage and the remaining guard with a sword, Gage wasn't doing well. He didn't have a shield… And the guard was a good swordsman. Gage pierced the guard in the chest, but not quite in any organ. The guard grew angry… And delivered an amazing blow, delivered to the heart. Gage jumped, and it instead hit him in the stomach. The guard cackled.

Gerd looked at Gage, bleeding out on the floor.

No. I can't let him die.

He grabbed the spear. He wasn't proficient with the spear, but it would have to do.

Gerd blocked a few blows with it, heart racing, adrenaline pounding, but it was obvious who was better with the spear. Just as all seemed lost, a dagger sliced into the guard's back. Another followed, and they were definitely poisoned, because he stopped moving and fell.

Gerd looked at Gage. He was bleeding pretty fast. He then looked at their rescuer.

Tiefling's POV

An ugly wound, I must say. With a few bandages, it'll be okay, though. I've seen worse. I'll patch him up secretly in my room, get some answers, then show them the secret exit.

I'll go with them. Help them get the Pearl. With it, killing Father will be a breeze.

The hard part will be moving the older one. Even getting him to my room won't be easy.

Oh well. I'll help them.

Tiefling, Gerd, & Gage's POV

Gerd noticed her: about his age. He went back to Gage, trying to cover the wounds and being extra cautious.

"Pity us! Please, no harm," Gerd pleaded.

"I will only hurt you if you hurt me." Tiefling paused, "I am Tiefling. May I look?" she said, nodding towards Gage. "I know how to cure," she added.

Gerd nodded.

Tiefling examined Gage's injuries. After a moment, her head popped up.

"I have bandages and such in my room. Help me assist him." Tiefling said.

Gerd helped a bleeding Gage off the floor, trembling.

"My room is this way," Tiefling said, walking towards her room.

Gerd followed, carrying Gage. They walked into a wooden door. Inside, there was a couch, a bed, a desk, a shelf, and a carpet. It was rather small compared to what Gerd imagined a room in a castle would look like.

Tiefling opened the shelf and took out some bandages and herbs. First, she bandaged Gage up so that he would stop bleeding. Next, she mixed different herbs and pressed them on an open part of the bandage. Finally, she mixed a brown herb with a yellow and green herb and said "Open wide," to Gage.

"Is that poison?" Gerd asked, concern forming on his forehead.

Tiefling raised an eyebrow. "No! If I wanted you dead, wouldn't I just call the guards?"

Gage opened, anyway, and Tiefling put the herbs in his mouth.

Gage chewed and swallowed, and instantly untensed himself. Pain was relieved greatly.

"Who are you?" Tiefling asked, "Like, names?".

"Gerd. Gerd and Gage," Gerd said, signaling to Gage.

Tiefling's eyes lit up with comprehension. "Ahhh! I see. You are the guys Father ordered dead!"

"Father? The… King is your… Father?" Gerd couldn't believe it.

Tiefling leaned back in her chair and sighed. "Unfortunately. Well, I hate him. In fact, I want him dead. Do you know what my name means? It means demon. Demon. I'm named by Father. How could I possibly be on his side? Besides… My loyalty depends on exactly how bored I am. And lately, I've been slightly a lot bored."

"I— Okay, sorry." Gerd was out of words. The king's own *daughter* hated him? Dang. He must be a horrible king. Not news, but what was news was that he was hated *everywhere*.

"Pity you. You have to keep up *every. Single. Day.*" Gerd couldn't help having empathy.

"Yes, well, because of that, I'm coming with you guys," Tiefling said

"Well, we're killing the king once he recovers," Gerd said, nodding towards Gage.

"I'm afraid you can't. He almost died against three guards. Father has hundreds, tens always on watch." Tiefling responded.

"I thought you *wanted* the king dead. Why are you against it? Don't give in, even if the odds are low." Gerd said

"I *do* want him dead," Tiefling said. "But I'm not throwing you into a fire just to watch you burn. You're not ready. But I know what will make you ready."

"What?" Gerd asked, intrigued.

"It's called the Pearl. I know you have Wind magic, which means you have magic and understand it. Basically, when you have the pearl, you have almost an infinite lake to do your magic. But it's far away. Maps can pinpoint approximately where it is, but I have a better idea. Let's go see the slaves," said Tiefling

"The slaves? What have they got for us? And how do you know I have magic, let alone what type?" Gerd asked.

Tiefling shrugged. "You're here, aren't you? Only Wind magic or teleportation could've gotten you to that balcony. And the prophecy says it—'*Wind shall answer the call.*' It's you. As for the slaves… I'm forbidden to see them, but I've already broken like 85 rules. A slave there… I think you will know who she is. Plus, she might give us answers." Tiefling responded to all of his questions.

"Okay… When are we going to see her?" Gerd asked.

"As soon as he can walk," Tiefling said, pointing to Gage, "and swing a blade without falling over."

"Tiefling… I forgot to thank you. We were dead meat out there, without you, you know. Also… How on Earth are you *that* good at fighting?"

Tiefling crossed her arms and went to check on Gage. "I disarm people in my sleep, then smash them with the truth. The final blow isn't even work."

Tiefling was checking Gage's heartbeat. "He's doing much better," Tiefling noticed.

Gage had awoken and was watching them.

"I'm ready… Tomorrow." Gage said.

"Tomorrow it is, then," Tiefling agreed. Gerd nodded.

The next day, Gage was doing much better. He could stand and walk, and even hold a rapier or dagger. What's better, his magic replenished, spirit high(at last for Gage, who is a pessimist), and he wasn't tired.

"They keep the slaves in the basement, deep down. The thing is I need a key that I don't have." Tiefling paused, and suddenly her face lit up. "I'll go to Varrin!".

"Who's Varrin?" Gerd asked.

"Librarian. Known him for like— forever, really. He's always been," Tiefling paused. "The dad I never had,".

"So, you think this Varrin guy will have what we want? That key?" Gage asked.

Tiefling sighed. "It's our best bet. If he doesn't have it, then… We'll just have to go by maps. But it's definitely worth a try." Tiefling said.

"I agree. Where is the library, anyway?" Gerd asked.

"On the second floor," Tiefling pulled out a map. "Right around here," she said, pointing at a big point on the map labeled in faded ink *'Library'*.

Gerd and Gage nodded.

"Game plan: You guys stay in here while I check if the coast is clear. If it is, you guys come out. On the stairs, nobody will disturb us. I'm royalty, after all. Oh… There's also a disgusting fact: Father treats me amazingly in public. They will let us by." Tiefing told her plans to Gerd and Gage.

"Okay," Gage said, while Gerd nodded.

Tiefling cracked open her door. "Coast is clear, let's go,".

They made their way down to the library. Like Tiefling had predicted, nobody stopped them. Sure, they passed by a few guards, but none seemed to want to stop them. In fact, they quickened their pace to get by.

Once they reached the second floor, Tiefling led them through a series of weird turns. Then, they reached the library. It was a monumental scene: A maze of books, towering over them. Books, books, wherever you went.

You could probably get lost in there. Somebody *is* probably lost in there. It was just so grand and big.

The bookshelves were made of exotic woods, silver, and gold. It was a mouth-dropping experience.

"Sooo… Where's this librarian that you wanted to find? And how are we going to find him? Through all these books, I mean." Gage asked.

"I never get lost in here. I know every corner, every line in each book. I've spent what— 75% of my life here? Maybe more." Tiefling said as she guided them through complex twists and turns.

After what seemed an eternity of books and turns, Tiefling finally said, "Just one more turn, and… Right here!".

An old man, covered with battle scars, sat in a leather chair, reading a book.

"Varrin!" Tiefling ran over to the old man and hugged him.

"Hi, m'dear. Who're those people you escortin'?" Varrin asked.

"Friends. Uhh, we have plans. You know, **plans**." Tiefling responded.

"Uhuhu. An ole man can't help with dirt work, y'know? What y'want? Cuz an ole man ain't dumb." Varrin said.

Tiefling leaned in to Varrin's ear. "We need a key. The key to unlock the door to the slaves."

Varrin readjusted so that his mouth was now in Tiefling's ear. "What you need them slaves for? Leave 'em alone, sufferin' ain't pretty."

Tiefling readjusted. "Answers," she whispered simply.

"Oh, okay. Answers to what? An ole man just might be able to give thee a few answers."

"The Pearl. We need to know where it is."

"Oh, 'kay. See, an ole man know only what he read. Pearl's off the map, so this ole man don't know where it is. This ole man *does* have that ole key yu lookin' for, though." And, with that, Varrin pulled out a key.

It was the strangest key Gerd had ever seen: its handle a skull, the metal carved in twisting, alien patterns.

Now that they had the key, they would have to know where the entrance was. Tiefling probably knew. Even if she didn't, Varrin 100% would.

"So… Where is it? The entrance to the slaves?" Gerd asked.

"There are some stairs in that direction," Tiefling pointed more towards the center of the library. "But, they're locked. Fortunately, an ole man I know gave us this key," Tiefling raised the key Varrin gave them. "And we can open the stairs! Below the stairs, there are the slaves. Then, we just have to find the slave we need. Easy peasy cheesy."

"Okay, lead the way, then," Gage said, at which Tiefling said goodbye to Varrin and headed in the direction of the stairwell.

When they got there, the bookshelves had become more scarce. They were empty, as if sometime they had books, but now they were gone.

Gage shuddered as he thought that maybe they were there, but hidden by magic.

"We're here," Tiefling said, as she inserted the weird-looking key into the lock. It clicked and then opened, revealing an old and dusty staircase.

Tiefling was the bravest, so she headed down first, followed by Gerd, then Gage.

Tiefling lit a match, and the dark staircase lit up.

The steps continued for a very long time. Then, it gave way to a dark hallway with a copper door at the end. Tiefling went to check if it was unlocked. Locked. Except it couldn't be locked; there wasn't a lock at all.

"How do we get in?" Tiefling asked. "It's locked, but it doesn't have a lock."

"Brute force is the only way," Gage responded, as he made his way to the door. He kicked the door several times, in a weird pattern.

"Gage, why are you acting that weird? Kick it normally, huh?"

Nothing happened to the door. And then, something extraordinary happened. The door started to glow.

"Back up! I don't like where this is headed!" Gage threw a warning, and everybody backed up.

Suddenly, the door burst into flames.

"But… It was— literally… Copper?" Tiefling was very confused. "Copper isn't precisely… Flammable, right?"

"No. It wasn't copper. It *looked* like copper because it was magic. I kicked it in a way to reverse the magic. My lake, clean, flowed out onto the dark magic, and they canceled each other out." Gage revealed.

"How long will it burn? We can't just step through there, precisely." Gerd asked.

"Pretty long! There was a lot of dark magic stored. Unless…" Gage sighed. "Unless you use wind."

"Wind? My magic?" Gerd asked.

"Precisely. See if you can summon something." Gage prompted.

Gerd closed his eyes and focused. Wind! Wind! It chilled you to the bone, but other times it burned you. FOCUS! He looked at his internal lake. Wind! Lake, summon wind. Some of his lake evaporated. A strong gust almost picked Gerd off his feet and interrupted his thoughts.

Gerd opened his eyes. The fire was out. The hallway extended. As they walked through it, they saw the remains of stories. Of humans. Some dead, some alive, all crowded in a very small cage. They looked at them with big eyes, hopeful. Gerd remorsed they hadn't brought food.

"Tiefling, who exactly are we looking for?" Gerd asked. "And where are they?"

"We're looking for a Germun. When you see her, you'll likely have flashbacks. That's how we know, if I'm being perfectly honest," she responded.

Gerd's eyes grew big. "Tiefling, you organized all this around *that*? But what if we don't?"

Just then, Gage gasped and covered his mouth. He couldn't speak. *'She's actually alive! They haven't killed her!'*

"See, that's the one we're looking for," Tiefling said, pointing at the cage Gage was looking at.

A woman, 45, maybe, though there was no way to know, as poverty changes everything, stood in the cage. Gage and she seemed to lock eyes. Then, Tiefling pulled up and sent the direct message.

"Who are you?" Tiefling asked.

"Ma— Madely— Madelyn. G— Germ— Germu— Germun." Madelyn responded.

Gage's eyes lit.

"It is you. After all these years," he said under his breath.

Gerd remembered this lady, but he wasn't sure when or where.

"We— We're getting you out, okay?" Gage said.

Madelyn nodded slowly.

"Where do you think the Pearl is, Madelyn?" Tiefling asked.

"M—Mount H—hi—high— Poi—Poin—Point," Madelyn responded.

There were footsteps on the stairs. Somebody walked in.

"It is illegal for anyone but the slaves to be here. Retreat immediately to your current position, or you won't come out of this place," A deep voice interrupted them.

"Well, you see, sir… You see, we got lost… I recalled I needed a key to get back, but I had lost it… Then, I noticed a key on the floor. This room wasn't the way I remember… But I didn't know my way back. May you escort us, sir, please?" Tiefling lied. Gerd and Gage realized *exactly* how good Tiefling was at lying. She was good at everything involving getting out of a *big* mess.

"Whatever. Don't got time to argue. Floor?"

"6,"

"Got it. This way," he said, leading the way. The man led them through the hallway, up the steps, out of the library, and to the stairs.

"I'm sure you know your way from here. Off you go, then," he said.

"Yes, I do. Thank you." Tiefling responded as she started walking up the stairs.

When they had made it to Tiefling's room, she opened the door, walked in, and sat in a chair.

"Sooo! Mount High Point, huh?" Tiefling leaned back in her chair. "There is a Mount High Point, but it's nothing that the maps haven't told us. But there was something in her tone… I *think* it's the highest point in Mount High Point."

Gerd was listening closely, but Gage was in a different world. He seemed to be pained, sad.

"Kermun to Gage, Kermun to Gage! Are you there?" Gerd called, but Gage was unresponsive.

"I'll catch him up later. So, you're saying to go to the highest point of Mount High Point? Where's Mount High Point?" Gerd asked.

Tiefling pulled out a map from the closet.

"Right here," she said, pointing to a point on the map. "It's twenty days' trot from here. Pretty far away. Also… Mount High Point is very hard to climb and very large. We'll have to leave your horse at the bottom and climb up."

Gerd looked at the map. The trail passed very close to their county.

"That's our town, right there." Gerd pointed to a point on the map.

"We can visit it, if you want. Won't hurt, I can assure you that." Tiefling responded.

Gerd certainly did *not* want to see the twins. On the other hand… Home was… well, home, where all of his memories lay.

"I say we leave it to Gage… I *do* want to return, don't get me wrong, but… the twins… Bully us all the time." Gerd said.

"I see… Do not worry. If they step close to you, I will kick their fat ass!" Tiefling said.

"Thanks. That means a lot." Gerd paused. "Sooo… When do we depart?

"Whenever he can talk again," Tiefling said, nodding towards Gage.

"Ahhh. When's that?" Gerd asked.

"Dunno. We can get out before then, I guess." Tiefling responded.

"Yes, I suppose so. Let's leave right now. I mean, he can walk." Gerd said.

"Agreed," Tiefling agreed. "I know a better way out than you guys came in. You can only access it if you come from the inside. There's a trapdoor on the first level."

Gerd got up, holding his hand out so Gage could grab on. Tiefling and Gage got up at the same time. Tiefling led them to the exit, down the stairs, and through a series of hallways that were unknown to Gerd and Gage. After